

The background of the page features a grayscale, textured graphic. On the left side, there is a vertical grid of squares, some of which are lighter than others, creating a pattern. On the right side, there is a large, stylized illustration of a hand holding a lit cigarette. The hand is positioned as if it is about to smoke. The overall aesthetic is that of a vintage or mid-20th-century poster.

**Why can't  
we  
smoke  
at school?**

**Guidelines to  
address  
students'  
smoking**

The Quit Campaign, in conjunction with the Directorate of School Education, Catholic Education Office and Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, has produced this draft policy statement to assist schools in developing smoking policy and procedures to deal with incidents of student smoking that place the emphasis on the health of young people.

Policies to eliminate smoking in schools are based on health goals to reduce smoking by young people. Smoking is still the main preventable cause of death and disease in Australia. In 1993, 35 % of 16 year old girls and 32 % of 16 year old boys in Victoria were smokers.

Since the majority of adults who smoke begin when they are at school, it is important to encourage students not to smoke. From January 1994 the sale of cigarettes to children under the age of 18 was prohibited. While schools often include some information on smoking in various areas of the curriculum, the environment provided by the school can either undermine or support what is in the curriculum.

Reactions to incidents of smoking by students are often dealt with by punishment at one end of the spectrum (detention, suspension), to 'turning a blind eye' at the other.

Many schools are attempting to develop a middle ground and provide a positive smokefree environment. They offer support to students who choose not to smoke and also to those who are trying to stop smoking.

It is well accepted among educationalists that all the players with a stake in a school's policy, students, parents and staff, should play their part in the development of that policy.

Once completed the policy can be publicised widely to ensure that it is well known and understood by all members of the school community by using - Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians: A New Approach for Dealing with Students who Smoke. (see Appendix 1)

## Policy Statement - Smokefree School Student Smoking Incidences

### Preamble

The uptake of smoking occurs predominantly among teenagers and procedures have been established to discourage the practice of smoking.

Smoking is not permitted in many buildings and areas in the broader community. For health and safety reasons, this school community mirrors that position.

(name of school) recognises the danger smoking and passive smoking causes to health and has established a policy to ensure that the entire school grounds are smokefree.

**Smoking is not permitted in any area of the school property, nor at any school related activity or function, by students, staff or visitors.**

(name of school) has established the following procedures to be followed in instances of student smoking.

### Student Smoking Incident Procedures

#### FIRST INCIDENT

Meeting with the designated staff member - this may be a Student Welfare Coordinator, Year Level Coordinator, Pastoral Care Teacher or Roll Group Teacher - to develop a Risk Reduction Agreement (see Appendix 2 - Sample Risk Reduction Agreement).

#### SECOND INCIDENT

Inform parents and reiterate school smoking policy procedures with student. Review agreement.

#### THIRD INCIDENT

Revert to standard school policy on non-compliance with school policies.



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# Incident

student meets with designated staff member

student and designated staff member discuss the smoking incident (see Appendix 3 - Counselling Model)

designated staff member presents background information on smoking and school policy position on smokefree school

designated staff member and student determine appropriate method for compliance with school policy on smoking

designated staff member and student develop a risk reduction agreement

the school and student each get a copy of the risk reduction agreement

## POINTS TO NOTE

• privacy of the student will be respected as far as possible

• discuss school smoking policy procedures and consequences

• designated staff member determines how school can best meet student part-way to support compliance

• designated staff member makes information on smoking and quitting available to student (student may choose not to take material)

• regular contacts are agreed for a period of two months

• students may be provided with Quit's young people's brochure *think about it...* or invited to ring the Quitline 131 848 (for the cost of a local call)

designated staff member meets with student to reiterate school smoking policy procedures and review agreement

make further suggestions for coping strategies

inform parents/guardians regarding school policy non-compliance (see Appendix 4 - Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians: Informing Parent/Guardian of Student Smoking)

### POINTS TO NOTE

- student may request further assistance to comply with school policy, or to quit
- material such as Quit's young people's brochure *think about it...* to assist student should be made available, but not mandatory
- the school will send a letter home to parents informing them of the student's non-compliance with policy and reiterating school policy procedures. Enclose Quit's brochure for parents, *Help your children be non-smokers*
- invite parents to ring the Quitline (131 848 - for the cost of a local call) to discuss ways of helping their child to stop smoking

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Incident

# 3rd

## Incident

- designated staff member to meet with student to outline standard procedure regarding non-compliance with school policy and further discuss risk reduction agreement
- student is referred to relevant staff member regarding school policy non-compliance

### POINTS TO NOTE

- *student's non-compliance with school policy is important in this instance*
- *student may request further assistance to cut down or stop smoking; this should be addressed, but is not a reason for non-compliance with school policy*

### 'Stop smoking' projects or programs

In no instance should students be required to complete assignments or attend courses to 'learn the dangers of smoking' to make them stop. Research shows that people are more likely to cut down or stop smoking when it is their own choice.

### Staff approach to student smoking

EFFORTS BY STAFF MEMBERS SHOULD AIM TO:

- inform students of the health consequences of smoking
- advise students of smokefree school policy
- provide students with available resources and/or referrals, when requested
- **be smokefree role models**

## Appendix 1

### SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

#### A New Approach for Dealing with Students who Smoke

Dear Parent

(name of school) has recently reviewed the way in which we deal with students who smoke while at school or during a school sponsored activity. As most adult smokers report that they took up smoking while of school age, our school community feels that we must do all we can to encourage our students not to smoke.

The emphasis of this new procedure is to put the health and welfare of our students first and not to resort to punitive sanctions until the other means of dealing with the situation have been exhausted.

The new procedure of how student smoking will be dealt with is summarised below.

**First Incident** Meeting with a designated staff member to develop a risk reduction agreement. This agreement will outline the steps that the student and school will take to assist the students not to smoke at school

**Second Incident** Parents to be informed. School smoking policy and procedures are reiterated with the student. The risk reduction agreement is reviewed.

**Third Incident** Revert to standard school policy on non-compliance with school policies.

Should you wish to discuss these new procedures please do not hesitate to contact (contact person/s) at the school on (school telephone number).

Yours sincerely

(name of Principal)  
Principal

## Appendix 2

### Sample Reduction Risk Agreement

#### RISK REDUCTION AGREEMENT

#### SCHOOL COPY / STUDENT COPY

This agreement is made between (designated staff member) on behalf of (name of school) and (name of student).

(name of student) is aware of the health risks associated with smoking and of the school's smokefree policy. (name of student) is entering into this agreement in order to reduce the risks to his/her health and to help him/her to comply with the school's policy.

(name of student) has decided to not smoke at school or during any activities sponsored by the school for these reasons:

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At school (name of student) tends to smoke at these times or in these circumstances:

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(name of student) will reduce the risk to his/her health and comply with the school's policy by doing the following:

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(name of student) will keep in regular contact with (designated staff member) for a period of two months. At the end of that time this agreement will be reviewed.

Contact will be maintained by:

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In order to help (name of student) reduce the risk to his/her health and comply with school policy, the school will:

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We have agreed upon the terms of this Risk Reduction Agreement for (name of student) and agree to review this agreement on the following date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Designated Staff Member's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agreement review held on \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Counselling Model

#### 8 Steps of Reality Therapy\*<sup>1</sup>

1. **Make Friends:**
  - Be friendly towards the student, communicating on his/her level.
  - The student needs to perceive you as a reliable person.
  - Ensure that the student develops a sense of belonging.
2. **Ask: What Are You Doing Now?:**
  - Identify the behaviour the student has chosen, letting him/her know that he/she have made that choice themselves.
  - Avoid focusing too much on past failures.
  - Identify positive behaviours, especially strengths and build on them.
  - Search for success and emphasise them.
3. **Ask: Is It Helping? Discuss:**
  - Do you think this behaviour helps you to feel better?
  - Reinforce the fact that the student has chosen this behaviour.
4. **Make A Plan to Do Better:**
  - Reconsider the consequences of this behaviour, possibly using a decision making model. Allow the student the option to choose a more positive behaviour.
5. **Get a Commitment:**
  - Discuss and/or develop the Risk Reduction Agreement.
  - The student should define the commitment he/she is prepared to undertake.
6. **Don't Accept Excuses:**
  - Excuses can handicap development of a new positive behaviour.
  - Even though it may seem difficult try not to give the student an easy "out" from his/her commitment.
7. **Don't Punish But Don't Interfere with Reasonable Consequences:**
  - The student may behave badly, resulting in him/her hurting but hurt doesn't change the behaviour of people who are already failing.
  - Restrict the student's field of operation but avoid punitive measures. Instead, reduce privileges.
  - If the student replies that it's "Not Fair", explain that it's probably not but ask them to tell you what is fair.
8. **Never give up:**
  - Keep your head above water, maybe another boat will come along. You can't get into a boat if you've drowned.
  - There is a "get well" system in all of us, you can do a lot for yourself.

<sup>\*1</sup> Adapted from Glasser W. *Reality Therapy: A New Approach to Psychiatry*. California: Borgo Press, 1990

## Appendix 4

### Sample Letter to Parent/Guardian - Informing Parent/Guardian of Student Smoking

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your son/daughter (name of student) has been smoking at (school/a school sponsored activity).

This is the second incident of this nature and it is part of our procedure to contact parents at this stage.

After the first incident your child had a meeting with (designated member of staff). At that meeting they developed a Risk Reduction Agreement. It outlined the steps that the school and your child would take to help reduce the risk that this behaviour poses to the health of your child.

As this is the second incident of this nature, your child will meet (has met) again with our member of staff to discuss the school's smoking policy and procedures. They will (have) also review (reviewed) the Risk Reduction Agreement.

We would invite you to read the enclosed brochure *Help your children be non-smokers*, which has been produced by the Quit Campaign. You may like to ring the Quitline on 131 848 to discuss ways in which you can help to reduce the risk that smoking poses to your child's health.

Should there be any further occurrence of this behaviour, the school's standard procedure on non-compliance with school policies will be implemented. These procedures are clearly outlined in the Student Handbook.

Should you wish to discuss any issue raised by this letter please do not hesitate to contact the school on (school telephone number).

Yours sincerely

(name of principal)  
Principal



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**Victorian Smoking and Health Program**

PO Box 888 Carlton South Victoria 3053 Australia

Telephone 131 848

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